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April 21, 1949

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Butler
General Gruenther
General Wedemeyer
Admiral Struble
General Norstad
Mr. Fahey

SUBJECT: DRAFT REPORT TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY
COUNCIL ON THE POSITION OF THE UNITED
STATES WITH RESPECT TO THE
EXISTENCE OF AN INTERNAL COMMUNIST COUP D'ETAT

The NSC Staff has prepared the enclosed draft report on the above subject for consideration by the National Security Council. It is requested that you indicate your concurrence or non-concurrence with the enclosure through your respective NSC Staff members at the earliest practicable date.

A Consultants' meeting on this paper will not be called unless you advise me that you consider it to be necessary.

SIDNEY W. SOWERS
Executive Secretary

cc: Admiral Hillenkoetter ✓
Mr. Chly

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April 21, 1949

DRAFT REPORT TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL ON THE POSITION
OF THE UNITED STATES WITH RESPECT TO ICELAND IN THE EVENT OF AN
INTERNAL COMMUNIST COUP d'ETAT

THE PROBLEM

1. To assess and appraise the position of the United States with respect to Iceland in the event of an internal communist coup d'etat or a threat thereof to obtain control of the Icelandic Government.

ANALYSIS

2. The National Security Council by NSC Action Number 10 confirmed the strategic importance of Iceland along with Greenland and the Azores.

3. During conversations in Washington in March 1949 between the Icelandic Foreign Minister and representatives of the State Department and the National Military Establishment, it was agreed that the possibility of internal communist subversion presents the most immediate danger to Iceland. The extent of the danger is indicated by the communist attack on the Althing on March 30, during the debate on the North Atlantic Treaty.

4. The Icelandic Government has made it clear that Iceland could not countenance the presence of foreign troops or military bases in Iceland during peace time. The United States Government has expressed its understanding and acceptance of this position.

5. An armed attack on Iceland by external forces would call for action under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

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6. A communist coup d'etat could result in consultation under the provisions of Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

CONCLUSIONS

7. A communist government in Iceland would constitute an unacceptable threat to the security of the United States.

8. The Department of State should therefore seek at such time and in such manner as it deems politically feasible an informal understanding with the appropriate Icelandic official or officials that would permit the deployment of US forces to Iceland in the event they are required to support a democratic system of government there against internal communist subversion.

9. The National Military Establishment should formulate detailed plans to deploy United States forces to Iceland to support a democratic system of government there against internal communist subversion. The Department of State should orally advise the appropriate Icelandic official or officials of the general nature of these plans and of the extent of the advance notice we would require in order to make our assistance most effective.

10. The United States should encourage and assist the Icelandic Government to strengthen its police forces and their equipment.

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